

EDITORIAL

In pursuing current magazines on architecture as well as the various AIA chapter or region-sponsored periodicals such as the NMA, the editors have been impressed by the paucity of real architectural criticism. Most of the material included in these journals appears as straight forward reporting—visual as well as descriptive. When criticism is present, it too often lapses into indiscriminate praise.

Although they would not dispute the value of factual observations or the propriety of "putting one's best foot forward", the editors of the NMA nevertheless sense a serious lack of vital criticism in contemporary architectural writing. This situation is in sharp contrast to the criticism of modern literature or for that matter in modern painting—a point that Albert Bush-Brown of MIT made when he addressed the annual Student Forum last November and which was reported by our UNM representative Albert H. Clark.

Current writing on architecture too often approaches the situation that pertains on the "Ladies Page" of almost any local newspaper. No entertainment, no coiffeur, no hand-done painting, no attempt at home-beautification perpetrated by a local citizen can be less than highly successful. All standard of excellence is sacrificed in an effort to stimulate local participation and good will.

Although such a situation is pardonable on the Society Page, it is not healthful in the realm of architectural reporting. The NMA editors, therefore, are interested in promoting a more forthright, mature and discriminating discussion of architecture in New Mexico. On the other hand, we realize that the NMA, as an organ of the New Mexico Chapter AIA, can hardly go on record as officially approving or especially condemning a fellow architect's work or a specific building.

What we propose is the inauguration of a new column entitled *An Architectural Forum* to appear from time to time as material is available. This column is open to any serious writer who wishes the opportunity for a public statement on architectural matters. This may take the form of articles, letters, comments, or rebuttals of specific articles that might have appeared in past issues. The contents of the section can not and must not be constructed as an "official" expression of the AIA, national or state-wide, nor even of the NMA magazine committee or its editors. The editors and the magazine merely make this public forum available in an effort to stimulate honest and discerning architectural criticism and discussion.

If one feels constrained to negative criticism in this column, let him try to make sure that what he says is not the result of spleen or caprice, for irresponsible negative criticism is to be avoided more than indiscriminate complements. What we hope for, however, is a more robust and stimulating analysis and evaluation of the buildings we design in New Mexico, 1961.

The article by John Tatschl, which appears in this issue, is a good one with which to lead off. Prof. Tatschl frankly disagrees with some of the things said by Dr. Gebhard in his article of last issue entitled "Notes of an American in Europe". Good friends as well as intelligent persons, these two men are not content to volley unrelated facts or bland complements back and forth.

J. P. C., B. B.

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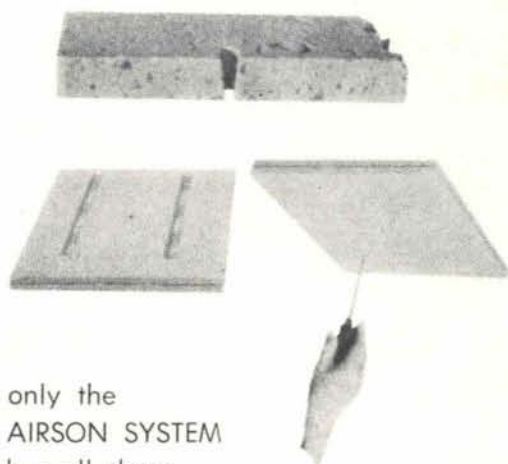


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